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**State of Wisconsin**

Department of Health and Family Services

**DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

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**April 2006**

**To:** Ambulance Service Providers  
Ambulance Service Medical Directors  
EMS Training Centers  
EMS Coordinators

**From:** Dan Williams, Chief  
Wisconsin Emergency Medical Services Systems Section  
Bureau of Local Health Support and EMS

**Re:** Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) Device

Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) use is now available to all EMT-Basic and EMT-Intermediate Technician providers in Wisconsin. This makes CPAP an optional skill in Wisconsin at all EMT levels.

The use of CPAP by Wisconsin EMTs for the treatment of respiratory distress resulting from congestive heart failure (CHF), pulmonary edema, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), asthma, and pneumonia has been shown to be both as safe and effective. CPAP has been shown to rapidly improve vital signs, gas exchange, reduce the work of breathing, decrease the sense of dyspnea, and decrease the need for endotracheal intubations in patients who suffer from shortness of breath from asthma, COPD, pulmonary edema, CHF, and pneumonia.

An operational plan amendment, course outline, PowerPoint presentation and sample protocol have been developed for use in developing your services' CPAP program. These are available on the Wisconsin EMS website at <http://dhfs.wi.gov/ems>. Written approval of an amended operational plan is required prior to implementation of your CPAP program.

**WISCONSIN PRE-HOSPITAL CPAP USE / APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS**

1. The ambulance service provider must determine which CPAP device to purchase and use.
2. The ambulance service provider and services' medical director must identify those qualified individuals who will teach the curriculum and test the students on CPAP.
3. The ambulance service provider must submit an amendment to their service's operational plan to use CPAP to the Division of Public Health, Bureau of Local Health Support and EMS (BLHSEMS). Written approval of the amendment is required.

4. The ambulance service provider must agree to provide the approved educational component to each EMT licensed with the ambulance service provider. (The service will maintain all training records.) This educational component will consist of:
  - A. Didactic Session
  - B. Skill competency check-off signed by the medical director
  - C. Passing grade on the supplied multiple choice test
5. CPAP use should be included in the service's CQI program. Use of the CPAP Data Form and completion of the outcome information for every CPAP patient (by the service Medical Director) will be a great tool.

Should you have any questions after reading the material on the above website you may contact the appropriate program coordinator as listed below.

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